PARTS OF A LETTER

Dear Mr. Monroe,

I enjoyed the spring bulletin very much, particularly the letter from the new Colombian member. And I was wondering if you would do this favor for me: I have for some time, been searching for seed of a giant timber tree that is indigenous to Colombia and Venezula. I believe that this tree, which is abundant in most areas where it is found, rather than being a rarity, is growing in the area where your new member resides.

Would you please print my name and address in the next bulletin along with this description of the tree? The tree's scientific name is Eperua purpurea and I believe the tree's common name is Wallaba. It is, as I said, a giant timber tree and it bears long hanging clusters of brilliant purple flowers from September to November. It is a member of the Caesalpiniaceae family. I sincerely thank you for doing this favor for me.

My address is 407 Lansing Ave., Louisville, Kentucky 40214.

Perhaps I can help Johnie of Colombia with a helpful hint. He states that he has difficulty in getting sets. Well, that may be due to the fact that his locality experiences rain every day. I myself, have never had a single pod to set when rain occured on the day that the flower had been pollinated. Wet pollen is not conductive to successful crossings. Also, I have greater success on cool days than I do on very warm ones. Johnie could try putting a plastic bag over the flower after having pollinated it during the dry part of the day. Then when it starts raining, the pollen will be protected from the excess humidity. Of course, in that tropical climate, the flower would be quickly cooked inside the plastic bag by the sun's rays; therefore, the blossom should be shaded. The bag can be removed the next day.

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LETTER (Cont'd)

I have been growing my favorite flower for the past sixteen years, since I was nine. I saw the first one when I was eight years old, in my neighborhood florist's greenhouse. The huge shrub towered above my head and the blossoms were the most gorgeous I had ever seen. I asked my florist if he would be willing to sell the plant. He laughed and said, "I couldn't do that; shes a special pet." But he did start me one from a cutting and so, shortly thereafter, I was growing my first hibiscus, Hibiscus rosa-sinensis flore pleno. And to this day that old-fashioned double rose-red hibiscus is still a special favorite of mine. Years later he got a couple of new varieties from a friend who had vacationed in Florida and he sold me starts of them. Finally, my old double rose-red hibiscus grew so large that I gave it to a friend who could accomodate it. As of the present time, my two fararites are (two instead of one; I can't make up my mind between them) Cathy and Golden Belle.

One thing that I have never been able to accomplish, is a successful crossing of Hibiscus rosa-sinensis with Hibiscus syriacus. Just imagine how far north the growing of Hibiscus rosa-sinensis hybrids could be extended through such a cross as that. Perhaps it just can't ever be done, who knows?

I do believe that the glorious Hibiscus splendens of Australia, could be crossed with the common Hibiscus moscheutos and just try to imagine the impact the resulting hybrids would have on the gardening world. Of course, Hibiscus splendens itself would be hardy in most Florida gardens. But, because it grows 22 feet in heighth, a large garden would be required to accommodate this beauty with the enormous blush pink flowers.

And whatever has happened to the world's one and only true blue hibiscus, Hibiscus azureus, found growing in the wilds of Australia in the mid-eighteen hundreds and then lost? More than a century has

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